

HISTORY OF JACOB MERRILL RASMUSSEN

Interviewed by Joe Norton on April 27, 1989

Joe: The first thing I've got is name and date. Why don't you spell your name so that I've got it correctly.

J. M.: My name is Jacob Merrill Rasmussen, J a c o b M e r r i l l R a s m u s s e n.

Joe: Ok and today is April 27, of 18, of 1989. Now when did you first come to the Uintah Basin and from where?

J. M.: We came to the Uintah Basin in November, I don't know the exact date, of 1917 and we came from Fairview, Sanpete County.

Joe: Uh, you said that you had, that you were born in Lyman, Wyoming. When did you move to Sanpete?

J. M.: Dad was a, uh, traveled a lot in his lifetime, he moved a lot and I was born in Lyman, Wyoming. From there he moved to Provo, Provo Bench, from there he moved to Scofield, or Winter Quarters, worked in the mines. From there he moved to Nephi, Juab County, from there he (blank space on tape) picks up again with-

Joe: Now you were one of the early settlers, but who else was here that you remember when you guys came?

J. M.: Well we was a few years late with our first ones that showed up in Lapoint all right but the Sprouses, the McMullins, the J. C. Hackings, the Perrys, the ...

Joe: the Perrys, you mean Floyd, Floyd Perry?

J. M.: the Marshalls, no, I mean, uh, what was his name? Dorothy Perry was his wife.

Joe: Oh, yeah, Tiger Lily.

J. M.: Uh huh!

Joe: Lily Perry.

J. M.: There you go. Lily, Lily Perry. Yes.

Joe: Tiger Lily we used to call her.

J. M.: Yes, yeah. Lily Perry and there was uh, Wilsons, no not Wilsons, Marshalls was here and uh, the Justices was here and there was more of 'em if I could just think of 'em.

Joe: Well maybe, uh maybe this will help. The business men, who was in business?

J. M.: J. C. Hacking run the store and post office up here in Lapoint-just one little white building. When we first came to Lapoint, my cousin, Uncle Jim Allred and his family came the year ahead of us and we went to their place for the first week after we came to Lapoint, before we was better located and Doug Allred, my cousin, took me out to the east side of the house and he said, "Do you see that little white building way up there in the brush?" For the life of me, I couldn't see that when he was pointing it out to me, so I had to look over his shoulder, where he was pointing, then I said, "Oh, yes, I can see that little white building. He says, "That's Lapoint!"

Joe: Laughs

J. M.: And so it was. That was Lapoint. That's all there was there, one, uh that one little white building which was the store and post office operated by J. C. Hacking.

Joe: Was that the same place where he later had the brick store? It was in the ??? J. M. answers over his talking...

J. M.: Uhhh, no, no he crossed the road from there when that big store was built.

Joe: Oh well then, then that little white building must have been about where the pool hall is now.

J. M.: Uhh, yes, yes it turned out that that little white building turned out to be the drug store. We had a drug store in Lapoint.

Joe: I remember that when I was a kid.

J. M.: Yeah, yeah a few years later and, and A. W. Norton had a blacksmith shop almost straight across the road from the drug store, to the north.

Joe: It was, it was.....east.

J. M.: It was a little further east.

Joe: Okay, the pool hall now and then there was a little building, uh there was two front doors to the pool hall, apparently.

J. M.: Yeah.

Joe: Uh, was the drug store torn down or was that, that building next to it ...

J. M.: I kinda believe the drug store, there was one, there was two there put in, you know, later on, there, so there's two of them standing there.

Joe: Yeah.

J. M.: And I believe it was the drug store that was torn down. And that would have been J. C. Hacking's store.

Joe: Yeah, ok. Uh, let's see, did he have the only store in town?

J. M.: Yeah, that was the only building in town.

Joe: That was Lapoint?

J. M.: That was Lapoint.

Joe: Uh, was there any miners, any uh, gold mining or anything going on at that time?

J. M.: Yes, there was the Blue Water Coal Mine, there's two mines being operated up there and the government coal mine was being operated up here in Deep Creek area, twelve miles from Lapoint.

Joe: Do you remember who, who run 'em?

J. M.: Uhh, Clyde Jail was running the government mine and Floyd Warburton was running the Little Water Mine and the other mine was operated by a Turner, I believe his name was.

Joe: Was there any uh, there wasn't any logging to speak of, any, any business, any mills in operation at that time?

J.M.: Uhh not exac., not right when we moved here, but right shortly afterwards Henry Lee put in a saw mill up here in the mountains.

Joe: Oh did he?

J. M.: Yeah.

Joe: Hen Lee was in just about everything.

J. M.: Hen Lee was the first one to start commercializing in these mountains and he put in a saw mill and right immediately uh, after he put that saw mill in Lapoint wanted to build what we called the recreational hall, just across the road from your dad's house, down here, and so fourteen of us young fellows, volunteers, went to the mountains in March, I believe it was, and we stayed up there fourteen days and in that fourteen days we cut the first trees that ever went into that saw mill and the snow was three and one-half feet deep and we had to tramp the snow down so, so we could saw the trees off and we never had to haul 'em in, they was so close to the mill, all they had to do was drag 'em in to their teams because it was the very first timber that had come out of that saw mill. And we, they was sawed into lumber and then we had sleighs that was to freight the lumber back down to the face of the mountain to Lightning Springs and us guys did the logging, the cutting the trees down and logging 'em up and dragging 'em in and I was doing some off bearing there from the saw while that was going on and we all fourteen of us had a job there for fourteen days and we put out 32,000 feet of lumber and put it on the face of the mountain in that fourteen days.

Joe: Boy, you guys were busy in ...

J. M.: Yes.

Joe: That was, that was the timber for the old activity hall.....

J. M.: That was the timber, that was the timber for the Lapoint Recreational Hall, which served as an all purpose building for the community, dancing and church and all the dances occurred in the building.

Joe: Do you remember the size of that building?

J. M.: Yes, it was 60 feet wide by 100 feet long.

Joe: 60 by 100.

J. M.: And uh, I believe the ceiling was 16 feet or twelve, it might have been twelve feet, it was a high ceiling--I'm not sure. So they played basketball in there. It was a regular (can't understand that word--asin) basketball floor.

Joe: Uh huh, Ok great, I remember the building, (J. M.: yeah) but uh, didn't know what size it was.

J. M.: Well, that's

Joe: Now that was a brick building...

J. M.: That was a brick building.

Joe: Where did the bricks come from?

J. M.: Uh, the Swain brothers uh, Abner Swain and his boys, built a brick kiln down just in his field just west of his home here in Lapoint a, a mile west and a half a mile north and then the brick kiln was a half a mile west of that, on his field, and they made bricks for the first brick buildings that occurred in this country, right here in Lapoint.

Joe: Uh, I understood too, from something I read, that a lot of his bricks went to Vernal. (J. M.: Yes.) That a lot of buildings in Vernal (J. M.: Oh yes.) were built out of 'em.

J. M.: I'm sure of that. I don't of any brick kiln in Vernal, at all. And so undoubtedly a lot of his brick went to Vernal. They were, they were good brick and they're in the buildings around here right now. We got all these brick buildings around here is just brick (some word I can't understand).

Joe: Abe Swain

J. M.: Abe Swain

Joe: Abe Swain's wife....

J. M.: Lily

Joe: Lily was a, uh she was uh, oh what am I trying to say?

J. M.: She was a mid-wife.

Joe: Mid-wife (J. M.: Yes) and she is the one who delivered me.

J. M.: And she the one delivered, and she's the one delivered my youngest brother, Ken.

Joe: Was she?

J. M. And she delivered a lot of babies in this country around here, Lily Swain did.

Joe: Yeop. Ok, uhh, now J. C. Hacking had the original store, the only store and post office,

J. M.: Yeah

Joe: and then what was the next improvement?

J. M.: Well, the next one a little brick building built by, I thought it was C. A. Thompson, I'm sure it was, but I was contradicted when they said William D. Mar..., William C. Marshall built that building. That it's still in existence here only it's been added to and that's one of the stores that sits in town now. But it was a little brick post office and C. A. Thompson and Dorothy Thompson operated it.

Joe: Now that's where the, that's where the Country Store is now?

J. M.: Yeah!

Joe: The big store?

J. M.: Yeah, the big store there. That brick that's there is that, is a part of that little brick building only now they've added on the top and they've added on the back and the east side.

Joe: Well I thought that uh, now that was right across the street from my dad's shop and I thought that ...

J. M.: Huh?

Joe: Yeah, that, that County Store, Winn's or now Harrison's Country Store, that's right across the street from where dad's shop was. Do you remember Zack Kump's store was over here and then there was a vacant lot and dad's blacksmith shop and some more vacant lots down to George Bigelow's store which had been Sprouse and had been Hacking, I guess, before Sprouse.

J. M.: Yeah, yeah, I think, yeah, ya got me kinda goin' there for a little bit. Uhh, this here, this post office is just east of the recreation hall, half a block.

Joe: Oh, well then that's where Smith and Swain was.

J. M.: Yes, yeah, that's whe..., that's where Mrs. Swain operated. That's the one.

Joe: Ok, Uhh, then you think it was C. A. Thompson that built that?

J. M.: Umm, I, I would've swore that it was C. A. Thompson but I was contradicted on that and they said that Marshall bought that, William C. Marshall bought, or built that. But uh, and then, but I know that Thompsons was the post master and, in that building.

Joe: Un uh, ok, then uh, I was gonna ask you where this Smith and Swain building came from.

J. M.: Yeah, yeah well that's....

Joe: That was, that was next then after, that was the next building after the community hall?

J. M.: Then, yes, wait a minute, wait a minute, oh no, this little uhh, big post office was the next after J. C. Hacking's store. (Joe: Yeah) The community hall didn't come in 'til quite a while later, after that.

Joe: Oh, aft..., ok, so then there was, then there was two stores, J. C. Hacking's store on the north side over near where the pool hall is, (J. M.: yeah) and then Smith and Swain, (J. M.: uh huh) and uh, or that building, (J. M.: yeah) and uh, then the community hall was built (J. M.: west of that). Do you know when that was built? When it was completed?

J. M.: Oh, good laws, that would be before I was married. Uh, so it must've been about '25, 1925.

Joe: Must have been before that because uh, uh, my dad came to th..., came to Lapoint in 1919, (J. M.: uh huh) and uh, my uncle, David Wilson had, had already moved here, he'd been here a year and before dad ever got here the arrangements were made, according to my mother, that as soon as Bert Norton got here, he would know how to, how to reinforce those walls (J. M.: uh um) to keep the walls from expanding and from caving in or collapsing. (J. M.: Yeah) And he took wagon iron, uhh iron, (J. M.: yeah) iron tires, (J. M.: yeah) made L A P O I N T (J. M.: yeah, he did) on the west wall and run rods all the way through (J. M.: run the rods all the way through) around discs on the east wall (J. M.: yeah). Well, that must have been about 1919. They came here in June of 1919.

J. M.: Well then, your dad was here when that was constructed, all right, but uh, it could have easily been, it must have been, because it was, it was right directly after we'd moved to Lapoint, I do know that. (Joe: uh huh) So it, we moved here in '17, see so, you're about right on that, about 1919 or 1920.

Joe: Yeah, ok then, uh, the, I, I think of it as the church house because as, when I was born and growing up, that was the church house (J. M.: that was, it was—as long as it lasted). (I can't understand what Joe says while J. M. is talking-something about community hall) and then he repeats, yeah, as long as it lasted. Then that building uhh, was the third one, then what came next?

J. M.: Ok, then, uhh that's about right. There was J. C. Hacking and then there was the little brick post office and then there's the, the recreational hall and then I think uhh, the Kump store come in next.

Joe: On the, on the corner on first east.

J. M.: On the, on the, just east of the blacksmith shop.

Joe: Yeah, just east of the blacksmith shop.

J. M.: I believe that one come in next.

Joe: Uhh, did Zack Kump originally own that? I, as I was growing up he was

J. M.: Well, uhh, I, I think him and a guy by the name of, oh I don't, went in together and decided they'd go to the store business. And they built that store and it operated for a few years and then Jack Kump's partner run out and left him and took all the money and the store then turned out to be a failure. And uhh, then uhh, uhh, I'll, oh, oh I believe Zack Kump continued to operate that but anyway it left him in the (not sure what he said-limpals?) and we never did see that partner of his anymore, he disappeared entirely. And then Ad Kump, when his dad kinda wore out, why Ad operated that store for quite a long while.

Joe: Did he?

J. M.: And, and then they built that garage over the north side of the road just across the road.

Joe: Yeah, Ad and Sadie, I remember, had some phonographs and things in there.

J. M.: That's right. They operated a little.....

Joe: They roller skated in there too, didn't they?

J. M.: Operated a little tiny nook in that corner of the garage over there. (Joe: uh huh) He sold candy and things like that.

Joe: Uh huh. Dad and Albert rented that for I think three years (J. M.: yes!) or so (J. M.: yep—for a garage) because there wasn't enough room in the blacksmith shop to fix the cars.

J. M.: Yep, he did!

Joe: Ok, then uhh, uhh, do you know who built that building? You referred to it as the brick building.

J. M.: Uhh, the garage? (Joe: Yeah) No, I really don't know. I didn't have any part in the building of that, even though my trade was building, but I, I really don't.....

Joe: Somebody told me it was Bill Cook that built that.

J. M.: I have an idea that's was who it was. Bill Cook, I just, I have an i..., that's who it was.

Joe: Ok, then, somewhere along the line, I believe Re uhh, Reed and Leland, your brothers, built that building where the country store is now, it's been enlarged of course, (J. M.: yeah) but I think they built that and put in a meat market, didn't they?

J. M.: Oh, the, the Exchange Market?

Joe: Exchange Market.

J. M.: Yeah. No, they didn't build that. Uhh, Morrill, uhh, from Tridell. (Joe: Frank, Frank or Ellis?) No, it was uhh (Joe: Horace?) No, uhh, Elroy's dad-in-law. (Joe: Oh, uhh, Elmer Morrill) Elmer, Elmer. Elmer built that and he run the meat market there for a short time, but that didn't prove it successful and so uhh, then we got a hold of it, just to lease, and we run, we put the Exchange Market in there, put linoleum in it, painted it up and made a real fancy little store out it. But uhh, in those days we lacked capital and uhh, we already had a store operating down here in competition to it and so it was a failure, as far as a store was concerned too. (Joe: Uh huh) And uhh, then when we went out of it, then Winn's took it over and they added to it and that's what the Winn's Store is up there now--the, the big store in town.

Joe: Yeah, that's the only store in town.

J. M.: The only store. Yeah.

Joe: Ok, at one time in uhh, in that J. C. Hacking store, where the little post office, the brick post office (J. M.: yeah) uhh, in that, I remember your mother and Pearl and Eva making hats.

J. M.: Yeah, mother run a little hat shop.

Joe: For a year or two years or something. I remember that.

J. M.: Yeah, they run a hat shop in that little post office store for a year or two. That's right.

Joe: Well this, this crazy town has had a lot of people trying real hard to make a go of it.

J. M.: Oh, have they ever. Oh, have they ever.

Joe: Then uhh, let's see Bill Sprouse had the store across the street from where the pool hall is now. (J. M.: Yeah, right.) Uhh, didn't J. C. Hacking have that usually.

J. M.: Yeah, he, I think he built that. That was a brick store.

Joe: Yeah, brick store.

J. M.: Yeah, and J. C. Hacking built that and uhh, I think probably Bud Moser's about the next one that took it over, actually.

Joe: I'd, I'd forgotten that—that Bud (something? Mullins?) done it (J. M.: yeah) for a long time.

J.M.: And then I believe, uhh I believe Neil Sprouse operated, him and his wife, operated for quite a long while there. And then Bill and his wife split up and uhh, and Thelma and her dad moved across the street and operated a, a store in the pool hall over there, in opposition to their mother just across the street there.

Joe: Oh, is that right? What did, what did they call the one there on the north side?

J. M.: Uhh, well the one, the, Lapoint Mercantile, I believe. But I'm not, ma--, no it'd be the Lapoint Mercantile was the one on the south side of the street. The one on the north, they, they started up when they broke up when they separated. I don't really remember that name.

Joe: Well, somewhere along the line E. J. Tuft had a store.

J. M.: E. J. Tuft operated the one on the south side, I'm quite sure and uhh, Hayden Foster operated the one on the north side.

Joe: That's right, Hayden Foster had one in there by the pool hall. (J. M.: yeah) Was that where the drug store had been, I wonder?

J. M.: Uhh, no it was in addition to the drug store on the west side, was his store. He operated the post office, uh that's kinda when the, the post office business went out of that little brick store. Hayden Foster, as new post office master, when he took it up there, see? (Joe: uh huh) and he operated the store and post office there and uhh so we had the store on the north side and we had the store on the south side. And (something I can't understand like most of the day) sure, we had three stores going here at one time.

Joe: Yeah, Zack (J. M.: and I believe it was) Zack Kump and (J.M.: and Kump's up there) and Sprouse and uh, then the one across the street, which was Foster's (J. M.: yah) so there's three stores

J. M.: Yeah, there was three stores operated there for a while.

Joe: And dad's blacksmith shop, let's see, what other buildings was there in town then?

J. M.: Can't hardly think. Uhh, we used to have cream day, you know in that....

Joe: Oh man, do I remember that.

J. M.: Do you ever, every, every Wednesday was cream day, you know?

Joe: Everybody, Eli Smith used to have cream there...

J. M.: Yeah and he used to have 3 or 4 of those guys collecting cream. They'd come there and collect cream on cream day and everybody'd come to town with their cream, you know?

Joe: Yeah, everybody'd bring (J. M.: sell it) their, their kids, their cats, their dogs... (J. M.: ohh) and (aunt somebody maybe,-I can't understand who) would come to town and us kids would celebrate cause we had a chance to see 300 people in a day.

J. M.: And that was a cel... Every Wednesday was a big celebration. That was cream day and people would come and get their money for their cream then we had three stores operating and they was all doing fairly well, (Joe: yeah) all doing fairly well!

Joe: Umm, ok..

J. M.: I think, I don't know what the Star Theater was operating at that time or not. There was the recreation hall, you said other buildings. The recreation hall was there, and I don't, the Star Theater was put in 1930, well, when I got married, is when I put that in.

Joe: In 1930 huh?

J. M.: 1930 yeah, that's when that was put in.

Joe: I've, that was my next question. (J. M.: oh, was it?) When did you, when did you build the Star Theater and how big was it, what size was it?

J. M.: I, I started it in, just before I was married and uh, I never finished it till about a year after I was married. It was uh, 30 by 80 feet and 16 feet ceilings.

Joe: Uh umm, and uh, I remember...

J. M.: And slop..., sloping floor, stage and uh, little snack bar and uh, for those days it was quite nicely fixed up. And I made it all by myself. I made those seats by myself. I did the whole dang thing by myself with my dad and my brothers help.

Joe: Uh huh, I remember the uhh, one time I went down underneath the floor, for some reason. (J. M.: yeah) You, you showed me the tunnel (J. M.: yah) that you had put through there that was real unique and, and far out for heat (J. M.: yeah) distribution (J. M.: yeah). You had a tunnel under the floor to let the heat go through. Now they use tin pipes, but uhh, you were on the right track.

J. M.: I had that tunnel running from the east, or from the north to the south, up under the stage. I could walk underneath the floor and come up, you know, on the stage (Joe: yeah) and uhh...

Joe: I remember too the, the combination wooden lock that you had on the front door. (J. M.: yeah) You had rods the size of a broom handle and uhh, oh 10 inches long or so, the way I remember, (J. M. yeah) and they were flattened uh, some way and I've, I've thought of that a million times since, but I, I still can't remember how that lock worked.

J. M.: Well, your dad, your dad built it and uh, and I used it.

Joe: It was a combination wooden lock.

J. M.: It was a combination wooden lock, yeah. Well, uhh....

Joe: They had to be arranged in a certain way in order for the door to lock.

J. M.: Again there was another business that was a failure and I, I didn't expect to make any money when I built that building. I was, just like your dad, I was trying to help make the community enjoy themselves, something that the people could enjoy. And that's the motive I had when I built the Star Theater that we could entertain people in motion picture—your dad brought the motion pictures in.

Joe: Well did he, did he run the theater or.....?

J. M.: No. No, uhh, he bought, there's a, an outfit come in showing motion pictures and while he was here, why your dad bought their outfit and ...

Joe: Oh, I didn't know that.

J. M.: And he operated the motion pictures in Lapoint in the recreation hall, that big recreation hall, for about a year or more and then when your dad went out to Salt Lake for winter to uhh, I can't remember which one (Joe: 1923, we lived in a....) yeah, that's, you moved to Salt Lake, (Joe: we went to, something I can't understand, the holidays) then I bought the equipment from your dad and then I operated picture shows. (Joe: ok) And I operated 'em in that hall until, and that gave me the idea of building a, a show house.

Joe: building a theater, yeah. (J. M.: And so I built that show house...) I'm glad to know that. I didn't know that, I knew that dad had been in the movie business in Panquitch (J. M.: in Panquitch, yeah!) but I didn't know that he ever did it here.

J. M.: No he, no he started it right here and he bought the equipment and he operated for a year or maybe two years, I don't know, and then I took it over from him and I operated in the same building until I got the new Star Theater erected so's I could operate there. And when I got that agoing why then I moved, of course, the equipment into that and operated there for about 8 years, uhh, the motion picture si...motion picture. And then when the mo...the, the, the uhh, (Joe: talkies) talkies came in, why then everything went talkie and I couldn't afford talkie equipment and so I, I just cancelled out (Joe: yeah, I remember) and I sold, and I sold the uhh, Star Theater to George Bigelow and uhh, (Joe: Acel Caldwell) Acel Caldwell and they operated, and they tore that sloping floor out and put in a dance floor and operated uhh, roller skating there for a period of time and dancing for quite a while and then roller skating and finally about uhh, five or six years later it burned down.

Joe: Uhh, do you remember when that burned?

J. M.: It was about, uhh, oh let's see, 30, it has to have been about 40, 1940, somewhere close to that.

Joe: Um huh, I think it was before that, uh, cause that was the first time I ever stayed up all night.

J. M.: Oh, was it?

Joe: Mom and Ma Smith had me hauling water from the ditch (J. M.: oh) all night long and that was the first time I'd ever stayed up all night long. (J. M.: Blair uh, it sounds like) And I was married in December of 1940 so I, I'm pretty sure it was before that.

J. M.: Oh, then it had to be. I operated the, the Star Theater from about, from 1930, I started operating before it was finished, well the building was never really finished completely, at any time, and I started operating, I operated about, about eight years, and then I sold it to them. They didn't have it too long 'til it burned down, so it'd had, I guess it could've been just a little before '40, all right.

Joe: You know there's a story uh, among us kids, that were here then, uh Lamar an Elroy an the Lamoreaux brothers and uh, us young guys in town, uh whether or not it's true, there was a dance one night, and on the way home from the dance Jesse Lamoreaux uh saw flames flickering in the windows upstairs, in the projection (something I can't understand), (J. M.: uh huh) so he went in, broke in or opened the window or something, went in and put the fire out, went on home and went to bed. (J. M.: uh huh) And Acel and George Bigelow went and got Elmer Caldwell up and says, "We told you to burn that. Get back down there and start that fire." (J. M.: laughs) So Elmer had to go back and start it again.

J. M.: He did. He did. He was paid ten dollars to burn that up.

Joe: He was paid ten bucks, huh? (Laughs)

J. M.: He was paid ten dollars

Joe: Well, I, I never did know how much, but uhh, Jesse Lamoreaux put it out once. (They both laugh.)

J. M.: Well, I never learned that before and it was just incidental that I got the ten dollar story but then that's what I heard.

Joe: Yep. Anyway there's some interesting history attached to this town.

J.M.: Yes, there is.

Joe: Umm, well that was uh, until the last few years, these old buildings being torn down and new buildings put up, its uh, until the last few years uhh, that's about the extent of the construction business in old Lapoint.

J. M.: For the most part, yes. We've co... pretty well covered that now. (Joe: Ok) Uh, when would you, they decided to build the new church house, I was uh, on the building committee with J. C. Hacking and others and, uh I had the job of tearing that old

recreation hall down. (Joe: Yeah) And so, me and my brothers and uhh, Art Curtis helped me a lot, tore the old building down and we used all the useable material, the brick, the lumber, and everything useable in that, in the new building.

Joe: Ok, I'll tell you another story that you didn't know. Uhh, do you remember the back part of the old building, the old recreational hall was uh, still standing or part of, part of the walls were still standing for quite a while and the basement was down there, (J. M.: yeah) in tact, with a lot of rumble and stuff in it? Well, Carlin Harrison, an John Harrison, he lives in Vernal now, he and I were good buddies (J. M.: uh huh) and uh, uh, he was the bishop's son, (J. M.: yeah) Jerry, Jerry's son. (J. M.: yeah) Ok, we got to prowling around there like kids will, exploring anything that's loose or open or empty. (J. M.: yeah) And uh, I said, well, I'm trying to learn to play a guitar. Boy, I need some of that celluloid off the keys of that organ. (J. M.: uh huh) And he said man, look at all these threaded bolts, an nuts, an, an rods down here in this organ. (J. M.: yeah) Look at all those little nuts. (J. M.: yea) And, we wound up tearing that church organ apart, (they laugh) because of that. He had a whole bunch of little rods and bolts and nuts and I had uh, enough of that celluloid off the keys to make me guitar picks from now on (J. M.: yeah) and uh, when we got all done I says what are we gonna do with this? You better take it home. And he said, No I can't take it home. You take it. No, I can't take it home. (They both laugh.) So we wound up burying it in dad's back yard, across the street. I don't think I ever got one guitar pick out of it. (J. M.: ohh) And two or three weeks went by and at the breakfast table one morning, dad said, Uh, somebody has been in the old church house, the old recreation hall, and torn the organ apart. Do you know anything about that Lamar? Lamar says, No, I don't know anything about it. Dad didn't ask me and I didn't volunteer any information. I just ducked my head and I ate cereal that morning, like it.....(they laugh together) And that's what happened to the old church organ.

J. M.: Well, I remember that very well, that, that church organ. Then it never was taken out of that, that little back building was being re... uh, torn down.

Joe: Well, it probably would have been if Carlin and I hadn't hauled off part of it to start with. Uh, ok Merrill, before Lapoint became a town and before your time (J. M.: yeah) uhh, there was a town of Taft, a town of Taft. (J. M.: yeah) Uhh, do you remember where that was and what, what can you tell me about what you heard about it? Who was there, where was it and

J. M.: Uhh, when we came here, uh why Doug Allred pointed that little building out and said, "That's Lapoint!" That was just after Lapoint had been moved up to that point. It was known as Taft before that time and Taft was one mile south and uh, located almost where uh, Dave Jenkins lives now.

Joe: Was that, was that the old Bill Davis house?

J. M.: Yeah, the old Bill Davis house. (Joe: yeah) Yeah.

Joe: Ok, wasn't that on the creek bank or the canal bank? Wasn't it right near a canal?

J. M.: Let's see, uh, where's that canal? I don't remember the canal coming there. There's a, but uh, this hill, Bill Davis house, anyhow, and uh, his son lives there now. They still live there, and uh he's across the road south of the road going east and west and the little lumber building that served as the post office was moved up to Lapoint and uh, and uh Johnny Lambert used it as a little uh, what-not shed, on his place, when it was moved up to Lapoint. But that was the old Taft post office and they may have operated a little store in there, I don't know. But Lapoint was known as Taft, in those days, and it was one mile (some word I can't make out) Lapoint is now, one mile south.

Joe: Do you remember uh who had that store? Was it Bill Sprouse's dad?

J. M.: Bill Sprouse, I believe. I believe it was Bill Sprouse.

Joe: Well, uh, seems to me like somebody told me it was Bill Sprouse's dad.

J. M.: Oh, it could be. It could've been. I, I'm, sure it was in the Sprouse family. Yeah, it could have been Bill's dad. Now I hardly know Bill's dad. But uhh, I think Bill Sprouse had something to do with that anyhow.

Joe: Uh umm, Ok. Uhh, what about the er... the early mail carriers and the routes they used?

J. M.: Well, the first mail carrier, golly, can I think? The Steve Ross was a mail carrier, carried the mail from uh, from Ft. Duchesne to Lapoint to Tridell for a long, good many years, but before that time, I think that mail come in horseback from, seem to me like it come from Vernal, but I'm not sure about that. That was before my time because uhh, the mail was being brought in on team and wagon or team and buggy, to start out with, or horseback, when we moved here. And it continued that way for quite a long while, for a number of years, and finally the roads got better, enough so that they'd begin to use motor vehicles to (Joe: yeah) transport the mail.

Joe: Well, 1917 and '18 the vehicles weren't very dependable anyway (J. M.: No, I'll say) back along with the trip.

J. M.: I'll say they wasn't. And the, in those days, Vernal and Roosevelt was a long ways away. (Joe: yeah) If you went to Vernal or Roosevelt, either one, you always took your bed and grub and stayed all night 'cause it was to big a trip to make going back in one day.

Joe: Was that uhh, uh let's see, was that with automobile or with team?

J. M.: No, that was with team and wagon.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, that would be a long day then, 18 miles, that'd be a long day.

J. M.: Ohh, I'll say. Well, we always took our, our bread an, or our grub, an bedding, an horse feed and everything and stayed overnight an (something I can't understand) Roosevelt, if we went there (Joe: yeah) and come back the next day.

Joe: Ok, what about early freight carriers? Now, the stores in Lapoint and other stores in the Uintah Basin, they had to get their freight, where did, where did uhh, where did it come from? Did it come from (something I can't understand) freight carriers, routes, wagons, trucks, drivers, uh, what can you tell me about 'em?

J. M.: I think that first freight came from Watson. That's where the railroad center was, uhh, and uh, and Colton. Now then, uhh, I ...

Joe: Colton, let's see, Colton was west, it's (J. M.: Colton is west) out my Soldier Summit (J. M.: yeah, yeah, just to the west) and Watson is down here, Rainbow Mine, down the Gilsonite (J. M.: uhh, yeah) mines. (J.M.: that's right.) Uh huh.

J. M.: Colton is seven miles north of Soldier Summit, uhh, no.. nothing there anymore, there's a building or two there, but that was quite a thriving little place, at that time. That was the railroad center because dad hauled Montgomery catalogues in his Buick car from Colton to Vernal one time, (Joe: laughs) loaded it completely with Montgomery catalogues, all he could haul (Joe: laughs again, oh boy!) from Colton to Vernal, that was sort of a mail ride. But, but I think most of the freight come from Watson, that was the closest point.

Joe: Uh huh, Uh, ok the, what can you tell me about the beginning of Lapoint and was there a cemetery at Taft? Do you know? (J. M.: No) The be... The beginning of the Lapoint Cemetery, how, how come they selected that spot?

J. M.: Just how they come to select that spot I don't know, but uhh, I was, I think I was here when that was selected and, but I'm not right sure about it, but anyway, I was here when the first grave was put in that cemetery, Archie Lee Searles. (Joe: Archie Lee Searles) Archie Lee Searles and he was a sick man when we come to this country and uh, I, he was extremely sick and the kind of a lingering sickness which lasted for a year or two, uh and, so I learned about it right soon, uhh, this sick man that they had in town there, and when he died, why he was the first grave to go in the new, just newly created Lapoint Cemetery. (Joe: Uh hum) And while we was burying, while they was burying him, why I stood on the south side of that grave along with Gene Nebeker and his fiancée, Fern Warburton, uhh, who he was intend to marry, ya see. We, the three of us, stood there, on the south side, just looking down into the grave after the casket had been lowed. And uh, Gene Nebeker said uh, I don't know whatever possessed him to make a statement like that, but he said, "I'll be the next one." It kinda shook me when he said that, you see. And eighteen days later he was, he was the next one.

Joe: Oh, for heck's sake, uh, Gene Warburton.

J. M.: Yeah, Gene, Gene Nebeker. (Joe: Gene Nebeker) That was Gene Nebeker. So that broke up him and his fiancée, Fern Warburton, of course.

Joe: Well, didn't she eventually marry (J.M.: She'd been....) Fern Gerber? Didn't she become Fern Gerber?

J. M.: Oh no, oh no! Fern, Fern and I was born the same day, the same month, the same...year. (Joe: Oh!) Our birthdays are both the same day, we was exactly the same age. (Joe: Uh huh) Anyway, uh... (Joe: Who did she...) she married McCoy Nyberg, then. (Joe: Oh, ok.) Yeah, Fern was the dark headed, uh, good looking, beautiful gal. (Joe: Um hum) Earl Warburton's sister. (Joe: Yeah, ok) And he, she married uh, McCoy Nyberg and, and when our 50th uh, birthday come along, why we had a party together, her family and my family, down there on the farm, because we both exactly the same age. (Joe: Great) Well, and uhh, so uh, Gene was buried then and he died because of the flu, 1919, when that flu was so bad, (Joe: Uh huh) he died of the flu (Joe: Oh, boy!) and they, thousands of the hail and hardy people in the United States was dying off, oh like flies. And it was taking the most healthy people, persons there was, just like Gene, right square in the prime of his life.

Joe: Well, I'm glad I asked you this because this contradicts a story I heard. I heard that the early days in Lapoint the people were so healthy they had to get a, had to get sticks and beat a guy to death so they could start a cemetery. (They both laugh.)

J. M.: Well, anyway, Gene Nebeker is buried just north of Archie Searles about 8, about 30 feet, and then there was a John Justice, or I believe, John Justice went in there right at that same time, so there was three graves showed up that winter in the new cemetery. And uhh, Archie Lee Searles headstone, that was put on there, as soon as they could put a headstone there, about this big, is in the back of the Lapoint monument up there right now. (Joe: Oh, is it?) Is up there, it's up there right now in the Lapoint....

Joe: That Daughters of the Pioneer uh, Monument, (J. M.: Uh huh, the Pioneer Monument we got up there by Winn's Store.) Well, what did, what did they do, put a bigger uh, monument on his grave?

J. M.: Uh, years later they put a bigger monument on his grave and whoever, I don't know how it come about, but the people from Salt Lake brought the bigger monument out must've taken the (END OF SIDE ONE) Later they put a bigger monument on his grave and uh, whoever, I don't know how it come about, but the people from Salt Lake brought the bigger monument out, must've taken the, the old stone, the smaller stone with 'em, and they lost it off their truck evidently up here near Duchesne City, and it fell off to the side of the road. And uh, the Highway Patrolman saw that and so they picked it up and took it in to the county seat up at Duchesne City and then they had it there for a week or two until finally they got a lead that it was connected with uhh, us people in Lapoint. (Joe: Oh, for heck's sake.) And so they, I, I got word that they had that stone there and wondered if I knew anything about it. And when they told me what it was, I said, "I'll say I know something about it because I married into that family. Archie Lee Searles' wife became my mother-in-law.

Joe: Yeah, ok, that was the next question I was going to ask you, was that uhh, uhh, Sylvia. (J. M.: Sylvia) Sylvia, Sylvia's husband was Archie Lee?

J. M.: Yeah, Sylvia's husband was Archie Lee and he died and was the first grave in Lapoint Cemetery. Then she married Lyle Blackburn, which had only one child, Vergie Ellen Blackburn, and I married Vergie Ellen Blackburn. (Joe: Uh huh) So that, that connected me with the family, see?

Joe: So, uh Floyd, Floyd Searl and Preston Searl, Dutch Searl and uhh, can't remember the others, the older ones, they were half-brothers to Vergie? (J. M.: yeh, Yeah) I didn't know that.

J. M.: They were, they (pause in the tape) coming into the family there was the five, the five children. There was DeLoss and Clifton and Floyd and Preston and, dang, what's her name, the daughter? Ohh, gosh, lovely little daughter I see was as much help as she was to my wife when she passed away, I can't think of her name right now. Aunt Helen it's uhh, ahh maybe it'll come to me. (Joe: I know too.) You know who it is. (Joe: Yeah) There was one girl and the four boys. (Joe: Yeah) And then, of course, my, my wife was the only child of Lyle Blackburn and I married her, so, uhh....

Joe: Hey, uhh, did uhh, did I understand, somewhere, now there's a, a family of Rife-R I F E-in uhh, Brown's Hole, I think originally. (J. M.: Uh huh) Was Rial Blackburn, a foster child, or som..in some way was he connected with that Rife Family?

J.M.: I never heard of the name Rife family.

Joe: Uh, they were, they were in Brown's Hole, in Brown's Park. (J. M.: Brown's Park, yeah) Uh huh, and uhh, somewhere I, way back when I was a kid, I, I, I don't know. I, I've wondered about that a lot of times and uh, never did get it straight. I wondered if, if uh he was maybe a foster child of that family, or something.

J. M.: I don't think so, I never have heard of the Rife family and Rial's father and mother were the loveliest people you ever seen, over here in Vernal, uhh...

Joe: Ok, well then. (J. M.: yeah) Then this, my memory is playing tricks on me or else (J. M. talks over him and I can't understand what he is saying and then it picks up with) what I heard...)

J. M.: Evi, eviden, evidently because his father and mother, over here in Vernal, were, and they were a lovely family. There was Rile and Ned and uhh, oh and then there's his sister, Bertha, and, and uh, Aunt Georgie and uh, was his, his brothers and sisters, a lovely family.

Joe: Ok, uhh, do you remember when they started school here? What was the first school like?

J. M.: The school, when I started school here in 1917 and us, there was five of us kids going to school, we, and at times we walked that four miles up here and walked back, nine or eight miles a day to go to school.

Joe: But see you lived four miles; you lived down on the river.

J. M.: We lived down on the river, that's where we....

Joe: Yeah, where did you go to school when you got to town?

J.M.: Well, well, the school house was right, right where the school house is now.

Joe: Oh, that was where they built the, the church, or the, the school building. Let's see that was six rooms, wasn't it? Was it that big?

J. M.: No, uhh at that time, uh, of course, when we come here why all there was that little white building up there. (Joe: Yeah) That's all Lapoint amounted to and we started a school down there in a tent, but it was right on that same ground right down here.

Joe: Oh, on the school ground (something said while J.M. is talking that I can't understand) in a tent.

J. M.: On the school grounds that's there now, the same, exact same place, (Joe: Uh huh) and we was in a tent and we had church and school in that same, it was just a big tent, it was about, oh it was about 16 by 20 feet, it was a big tent. (Joe: Uh huh) And uhh, I remember the first Sunday when we went there uhh, I opened that tent door and Hayden Foster was right there and shook my hand and, gosh he'd like to shook it off, and welcomed us as a family to their Sunday School, he was the Sunday School Superintendent. (Joe: Uh huh) And that was in that tent. Well, that tent was also the school and Mister Calder was the teacher from Vernal, in that tent, so five of us kids went to school there in that tent and the one teacher for all eight grades. And then uhh, the little white building that was put up next to it was put up directly after we came because I, I did a little work on that little white building. I put the blackboards in, I had to plaster 'em in, uhh blackboards on that so's it could be used for school. And so that turned out to be the dance hall, the church house, social house, everything, in connection with the tent that set to the side of it.

Joe: Uh huh, little white building, now that was, uhh, that, as I remember that was a one room building (J. M.: yeah) and pretty good size, (J. M.: pretty good size) and uhh, I think they moved it, they hooked teams on it and moved it, seems to me like it was used as a seminary building or something, for a while, back in the, in the early thirties.

J. M.: Well, if it was I, I don't really recall that, but they put teams and wagons, or horses, on that and pulled it up here in town.

Joe: Oh, did they pull it up in town?

J. M.: And right where the post office is now, it was just across the road, east of the post office-right behind the pool hall! That was where it was put.

Joe: Oh yeah, I remember (J. M.: yeah) ok, now I remember that building.

J. M.: Yeah, that's the building, that's the building. (Joe: yeah) And it was made then, it was remodeled made for a rental, home rental, and it was only rented one time, for about

two years. It was too close in town for people to live in and too close to be a pool hall. So it wasn't popular and so it, it proved a failure. And I had the job of tearing that one down.

Joe: That was dismantled, wasn't it?

J. M.: I, yeah, I dismantled it, I, I had the job of tearing it down.

Joe: Yeah, uhh what about uh, what about recreation in Lapoint. We've covered a little bit of it with the theater and so on, and the dances. I remember there used to be some good dances.

J. M.: Well, we had the loveliest dances, that ever was. Uh, every, I believe it was one of the mon., one dance a month, I believe it was. We had those rabbit ear dances, you know, when Lapoint and Tridell, there was lots of rabbits in the country at that time, and uh we'd have contests and the one that killed the most rabbits, the community, they had to keep their ears, see to prove, prove that you killed the rabbit.

Joe: Oh, you scalp 'em.

J. M.: And, and so they had to han..hang up those ears and the ears had to be connected, see? (Joe: Uh huh) And the... so when the dance would come on, why Tridell'd bring in all their rabbit ears and Lapoint'd bring in their rabbit ears and in the middle of the dance they'd count 'em, here in the middle of the dance floor. (Joe: laughs) And we had rabbit ears piled up there for two pi..., two feet high; (Joe: laughs again) two piles of rabbit ears. Well, the one that, that lost, the one that uhh, the one that won, of course, th.. that was fine, but the one that lost had to s... uhh, put on the dance for the next month, they had, they had to furnish the music and put on the dance for the next month.

Joe: Uh huh.

J. M.: So we had those rabbit ear dances which were exciting and ours was getting away, getting rid of the rabbits in the country we had them, they'd eating our crops, you know, (Joe: yeah) destroying the crops, so that's the reason that was brought on. And then they had those weight dances. You paid a half a cent a pound for the lady you brought to the dance. (Joe laughs and says half a cent a pound) Half a cent a pound, yeah (and J. M. laughs too.) Oh, we had, and then we had those basket dances and those toe dances and we had

Joe: Wha.., what do mean toe dances?

J. M.: Oh, they'd a, the ladies would get up behind a curtain and you'd come along and pick your lady by the looks of her toes; (Joe: laughs) they'd just be a sticking out underneath the curtain, you see, and you'd select your lady from the, the looks of her toes.

Joe: What you'd try to, try to pick the girl you brought, I guess?

J. M.: Yeah, you, you'd try, you pick the girl you brought but the, but the one that, that you got, no matter who it was, was the one you ate supper with. (Joe: Ohh) They always had, nearly always had, suppers, lunches in those dances. (Joe: Uh huh) And they'd dance till twelve o'clock and then uhh, eat lunch and then dance till two o'clock. That's what the dance...

Joe: Well that, the basket dance that you mentioned, now that was, that was supper, I suppose?

J. M.: Yeah, that was suppers too, yeah, yeah. You'd uh, they'd bring the baskets in and then you'd auction 'em off (Joe: Uh huh) and the buyer of the auc, the basket would eat supper with the one that produced the basket. (Joe: Uh hum, uhh...) Those was fun dances; oh, I'll tell you, we used to have some fun times. I'll tell you they wasn't no.... (Joe: They did, they did in my day too) Oh, I'll tell you them was fun days, we look back at 'em as the good ol' days, but there's one thing about those good ol' days-- they're gone!

Joe: Laughs, that's the best thing.

J. M.: That's the best thing about 'em, yeah. But I look back at them and I thoroughly enjoyed 'em. We were really having hard times but we didn't know it.

Joe: Yep, uhh, seems to me like as I was growing up, Lapoint had something going every time there's uhh, any excuse for a celebration, the 4th of July, 24th of July, anything that came along they had a celebration.

J. M.: The 17th of March for the Relief Society, oh, I'll say, and Christmas and uhh, oh yeah, they did, they had something going on for every, every excuse like you say, they had.

Joe: If somebody got an A on a report card, the whole town would celebrate.

J. M.: Yeah, you bet. I'll tell you they was. And our, our ball team was just tops. One year they took the State of Utah, Lapoint took the State of Utah for baseball.

Joe: Oh, is that right? (J. M.: in Salt Lake City, we) uhh, what year was that, do you know?

J. M.: You ought to hear ol' Lawrence Caldwell laugh about that now. He says, "By golly, we went out there to Salt Lake and we beat the whole bunch of 'em."

Joe: (Laughs) Do you know what year that was?

J. M.: No, but Lawrence could tell what year it was. If you, you can contact Lawrence Caldwell.

Joe: Oh, I'm, I'm going to.

J. M.: Yeah, he'll tell you what year that was.

Joe: Uhh, do you remember who was on the team, besides Lawrence?

J. M.: Oh yes, Clyde Jarrell an' Tom Ross an' Jim Marshall and uhh, oh and uhh, good laws, why? E. J. Tutt, I don't know whether E. J. Tutt was right on that time or not. Oh gosh, I ought to think of them guys, but that's part of 'em anyhow. There's nine of 'em.

Joe: Uh huh, Ok, uhh, we're going to run out of tape here unless we kind of move along. I'm enjoying this but I only brought one tape--I should have brought two. Umm, I remember uhh, rodeos and uhh, parades in Lapoint.

J. M.: Oh yes, we always had a parade.

Joe: And the, the gypsies came every year for.....

J.M.: Yeah, and the gypsies came along every year. They was kind of a pest to us but they always came along and uhh, the rodeos, yeah, we'd, we'd have rodeos, horse racing, and debates, lots of debates going on and our dancing and house parties was strong, very strong, lots of house parties all the time. (Joe: Yep) And uhh, theatrical performances was going on all the time, created every year we had our three act plays, you know, and, and one act plays, uhh that the community looked forward to all the time; golden green balls was very outstanding.

Joe: But we had uhh, professional rodeos. I remember when I was a kid down at the old school grounds (J. M.: yeah) there wasn't any rodeo arena, (J. M.: no) as such, uhh, just the school fence. (J. M.: yeah) The cowboys had a hard time getting', getting' the cattle and the horses back into the corral so they could ride 'em again. (J. M.: That, That's right.) But we had professional rodeos. The first time I ever saw a car with the, with the steering wheel on the right side (J. M.: yeah) was a red headed cowgirl from Canada driving a Canadian car (J. M.: Uh huh) and uhh, the steering wheel was right side.

J. M.: The steering wheel was on the right side, that's the way....

Joe: She, she won some kind of an award that day. I don't know now what it was.

J. M.: The old Buick that we drove from Sanpete County out here, when we moved here, the steering wheel was on the right side. (Joe: Oh, was it?) Yep, I drove it out here. The family rode in it. (Joe laughs)

Joe: Ok, uhh, what about early Indian affairs in the Uintah Basin--problems, names, what can, what can you tell me about (keeps talking but I can't understand what he says because J. M. is talking right over the top of him)...

J. M.: Well, we, we rented an Indian uhh, lease when we came here, John Murray leased down on the river bottom. He was a fine, intelligent man, but he was as black as, he was a full blood Indian, but he was a very intelligent man and he had a lot of cattle and a lot of, and some fine horses. He let us take his horses, big fat, fine horses to till that soil with, and then uhh, uhh, we had the lease on a half lease—he took half the crop and we took half the crop, see? And that 1918 was a dry summer and uhh, that's how he brought his cattle, white faced cattle, down from Whiterocks to feed up the fall feed that he was

entitled to and then dad sold him our hay along with, the half, the hay that belonged to him, that we raised that summer, which wasn't very much. And uhh, in December that hay run out and the fall feed run out because we had a hundred and two head of those bald-faced cattle on the, on that forty acres that we had leased. So the feed run out in December and there was no feed for 'em, none, because there was, it was a dry year and there was no feed for people's cattle. It was just destitute everywhere. And in January and February and March those cattle started dying off and in those three months, they didn't start till late in December, in, in January, dying off. But right in our dooryard thirty-six head of John Murray's big, bald-faced cattle died. (Joe: 36 head) Thirty-six head out of that one hundred and two (Joe: Boy) died of starvation and freezing to death. And he allowed us to skin 'em, if we wanted to, if we wanted to have the hides, he allowed us to skin 'em. And the hides was worth a little then, too, so that was, that was good. So everyday, almost, we was skinning cattle right in our dooryard. And all those carcasses was there in the field right out from our dooryard and the next spring had to be disposed of. (Joe: Yeah) So that was, that was something.

Joe: Ok, uhh, by the time you came in 1917, Fort Duchesne had been, the soldiers had been moved. Was there any activity around Fort Duchesne, did the soldiers ever come back periodically or....?

J. M.: If they did, I never seen 'em. I never did see any sport, or soldier activity in Fort Duchesne at all.

Joe: Oh, and uhh, was there anything, let's see the Gusher Strip, that uhh, that no man's land, (J. M.: yeah) Gusher Strip, (J. M.: yeah) that was taken care of in 1906 (J. M.: uh huh) so uhh, there was law and order there (J. M.: yeah) that had been cleaned up before your time.

J. M.: Yeah, that was before our time.

Joe: Do you remember, what were some of the stories they told, and what, what do you remember about the Gusher Strip?

J. M.: Not too much, just the name's about all I do know about that. I just know there was a Gusher Strip, but that was ten years ahead of our time. (Joe: yeah) So....

Joe: Uhh, how about Wong Sing (J. M.: Wong Sing) and other businesses?

J. M.: Wong Sing running off a store down there and that was uhh, the prominent store of this whole basin uhh, over in this side, at that time. And so we did our trading at Wong Sing's, he was a Chinaman. (Joe: yeah, umm) He was, he was a nice little Chinaman to trade with.

Joe: Ok, back then, back then they uhh, they talked about outlaws being bad men and there was a lot of men who were good men and bad men, you know. Can you tell me any hair-raising cowboy and Indian stories or uhh anything, anything of that sort?

J. M.: Well, Hen Lee used to be very free. When we was working at the sawmill up there, why in the evenings he'd come out and sit around the campfire with us and him and He...Eli Lee, his brother, and they'd tell their old time stories. (Joe: uh huh) (Something I can't make out and then it picks up with) we used to get a kick out of it. I was glad when evening come along to hear them dang stories. (Joe laughs) And he was one of those old outlaws, Hen Lee was.

Joe: Yeah, he served ten years in Wyoming in prison.

J. M.: Yes, in the, and over in Brown's Park there, why he told, you know about uhh, robbing a bank, I don't know whether it was the Vernal Bank or not, but him and some of his pals, and they took the money back over there and, and Hen Lee got caught. And he laid in jail for about ten or twelve years, over that. (Joe: yeah) But his, his friends got, got away. He wouldn't tell on 'em and so they got away. But uhh, they buried the money someplace, or he did, or something, he must of, they had been, had a hold of that money because the money was buried and when he got out of jail he went back to that spot and dug up the money. And he built a store over here in Leeton. All that money to start with went into the store business and he put, he built another store out in Watson, or some dang place out there, Dragon or (something I can't understand because Joe starts talking)

Joe: And he owned part of the Gibson Hotel in Vernal. (J. M.: Yeah, they probably was) He was, he was in on that (J. M.: yeah) and the store in Lapoint, he built the pool hall, didn't he? (He says something but J. M. is talking over him and I can't understand it.)

J. M.: Uhh, he might, he might've had something to do, I don't recall who.....

Joe: Some, somebody told me no, he didn't. It was Bill Cook.

J. M.: But he, he built, he built the Leeton Store over here.

Joe: Yeah, he had a dozen businesses. I'll tell you what (Kay eye - phonetic spelling) told me. (J. M.: yeah) "Kay eye" was his son, (J. M.: yea, no) or nephew, nephew (J. M.: his nephew, yeah) he was Eli's son, but uhh, "Kay eye" told me that, that Hen Lee, down here in the twists, that he had a road stop to sell uhh, feed for the horses and the freighters and so on, and some of these guys, the wild bunch, came by and wanted to have supper and they were visiting and he said, "Well shoot the heads off a couple of those roosters and we'll cook 'em up and have supper." (J. M.: Uh hum) So Butch Cassidy, or whoever it was, shot the heads off a couple of chickens and they cooked 'em up and while they were talking that evening, decided the business was poor anyway and they were on their way to Wyoming to rob a train. So Hen Lee decided to go with 'em. (J. M.: Uh uhh) He turned the animals loose and opened the chicken coop door, or whatever, and uhh, anyway he went with 'em. (J. M.: Uh huh) They robbed the train and the posse got after 'em, chased 'em back up in the Uintahs, and they decided to bury the gold and split up. (J. M.: Uh huh) They buried the gold and split up and, the, the posse was still after 'em, (J.M.: yep) so Hen Lee circled around and moved the gold

to another spot. (J. M.: laughs and says, "That's how it was.") He moved the gold to another spot and the posse caught him. (J. M.: Yeah, yeah and he got caught!) But he, but he uhh, he spent ten years in, in the pen in Wyoming (J. M.: yeah) and when he got out, he came back and dug up that gold (J. M.: yeah) and about that time M. J. Meagher had come to Vernal and opened up the (J. M.: bank) the bank. He'd uhh, shipped those parcel post (J. M.: yeah) bricks in (J. M.: yeah) and he opened the bank...

J.M.: Shipped the whole building, big, great big building, all the bricks come in by parcel post in the mail.

Joe: Yeah, not allowed to do that anymore. But anyway, Hen Lee goes back and he digs up this gold and sold it to M. J. Meagher at a cutthroat, cutthroat price. (J. M.: yeah) Well, that give M. J. Meagher a start (J. M.: yeah) and gave Hen Lee the money he needed to get into a bunch of businesses around (J. M.: yeah) the country here. That's what "Kay eye" told me.

J. M.: That's what he does, all right. Well that's, that, that's new. I hadn't learned that part, but Hen was very free to tell his life and uhh, what he done and how he done it, in those camp fire stories up there. (Joe: yeah) And uhh, I got a kick out of 'em.

Joe: Uhh, Ok, uhh there's a, a gentleman at the Gusher Strip, that you read about, Tabby White, do you remember hearing about him?

J. M.: Tabby White is, is, is, is foreign to me. I really don't recall that name.

Joe: Well, uhh, he shows up in some of the books as a, as a gunfighter. He uhh, supposedly killed three men in one stop down there one time, but uhh... (J.M.: uh huh) Do you remember Snake Pete?

J.M.: Snake Pete, yeah, he, he...

Joe: He wasn't an outlaw but uhh, what do you remember about him?

J. M.: Well, Snake Pete uhh, had a little property up Deep Creek here and there's, and they call it Snake Creek Hollow to this day. Uhh, I did know, I've seen him and that's about all, just a get, that Snake Pete, that's about all I know about him.

Joe: Well when uhh, when he died he willed his property to Frances and Pearl Harrison. (J. M.: That's right!) I believe I'm right.

J. M.: To Fran, uhh I, I don't know whether Pearl, Pearl got in on it or not, but Frances got it. Yeah (Joe: Oh, was it just Frances?) Frances was a, uhh, she was a special friend of Snake Pete, did a lot for him, you know. She was just a girl and he was a, a kind of an old man, but she done a lot for him and that's how she got the property.

Joe: Oh, I thought it was the two of 'em.

J. M.: No, no, I don't think Pearl got any, I went toge, went with Pearl for years, as, as a girlfriend, and no, I don't think Pearl got any, anything in that. Frances got the whole thing.

Joe: Ok, what can you tell me about Rose Daniels?

J. M.: Rose Daniels? Well, Rose Daniels, uhh, ain't she a daughter of uhh...

Joe: She's the mother of Al Daniels.

J. M.: She's the mother of Al Daniels, was she?

Joe: Yeah, do you remember the little, (J.M.: Well, uhh) the little hundred year old Indian lady that used to come to town (J. M.: yes) once a week (J. M.: Grandma Daniels, Grandma Daniels) Grandma Daniels.

J. M.: Yep, Oh that, she was the, ohh, Rose Daniels. I was thinking she was one of the girls that played especially good, her and her sister, in baseball. But that must've been uhh, a younger generation.

Joe: Yeah, that was probably a granddaughter.

J.M.: Yeah, that's the granddaughters. Yeah, I don't know too much about Rose Daniels.

Joe: Ok, how about Frank Ninance?

J. M.: Well, now, yeah, Ninance?

Joe: and George Ninance?

J. M.: George Ninance. Well, he lived up here neighbors to us and he was a good neighbor. He was an Indian, but he was a good neighbor. And uhh, that's about all I know him. He's buried up in the, in the Lapoint Cemetery.

Joe: George is?

J. M.: I'm quite sure he is.

Joe: Frank, I think is here...

J. M.: They've got a Ninance, there's a Ninance lot up there anyhow and they're, they've got two graves in it.

Joe: Oh, have they? (J. M.: uh huh) Well, Frank, I think, was George's dad and I think he was buried on the farm, down there.

J. M.: Ohh, oh yes, there's a grave down there, on the farm, so that's probably right. And uhh, uhh this, this don't connect right with what we're talking about, but uhh, my neighbor here, Art Taylor and Ethyl, you know them? (Joe: Uh huh) They was up there visiting

with friends at the Daniel Marshall's place, and he lived up there for a while, right close to the canal. And uhh, during the visit, why they missed their little baby daughter, she was just playing around the house there, you see. And uhh, just a baby, and uhh, they went huntin' for her and they couldn't find her. And so Ethyl rode down to our place, with her car, half mile away just to see if she had come down there with our children that had been up there. But that wasn't the case, but we found she was missing, so uhh, McCoy Nyberg and I walked up the canal then, him on one side and I walked on the other side up the canal because they was afraid that she'd been lo...fell in the canal. And so we walked up the canal watching for any signs of a body in the canal. And we walked clean up there, it was around through my field and up there, and we walked clear up there, and by that time there was big crowd of people there that accumulated and was huntin' for this child. An' they was sure she'd uhh, gone into the canal. And uhh, so when there's so many of 'em there we couldn't do anything and so McCoy and I, we started back home, and he lived west of there, so he went straight on home and I, I followed the canal down, right past. And when I got into Ninance's field there, the canal made a turn in there, I was on the east of the canal and walkin' along, watchin' you see, and Mrs. Ninance was on the west side of the canal, see that's where she lived, right there by her house. And she was on the canal as I come along and as I come, come along why, all at once she said, "There she is." And she just jumped in that canal, Mrs. Ninance did, the Indian lady, and grabbed that child and brought her up in her arms, you know. And course, she'd been in the water for a half an hour or more.

Joe: Ohh, she was dead, huh?

J. M.: Oh yes, dead, I should say, and so I went down in the water with Mrs. Ninance and she handed me the baby and I come out on the east side because I'd been on the other side, the road side, and I walked with that baby up, back up to the house, where that big crowd of people was searching in the canal with my ba, that baby in my arms.

Joe: Now that was Art and Ethyl's...

J. M.: That was Art and Neth, Art and Ethyl's baby (Joe: Uh huh) and when they seen me coming, somebody seen me coming, walking up the road, with that baby in my arms, why course that broke up the whole thing and here come Ethyl down there, just as hard as she could run, and so I handed the baby to Ethyl and she took her from there on and started dressing her for burial when, in an hour or so later.

Joe: Yeah. Ok, there's another Indian here that uhh, I never did know what his name was, or her name, whoever it was. Uhh, we all, we kids always referred to him as Old Marth.

J. M.: Old who?

Joe: Old Marth, Marthadat. (J. M.: Marthada...oh, yeah, oh yeah) We didn't know whether it was a man or a woman in uhh, man in a woman's clothing, or a, or a woman, (J. M.: yeah)..

J. M.: Well, I've heard that but I don't know anything about it.

Joe: Uhh, about the only thing I remember other than seeing old Marth a bunch of times when Ted was working for Smith and Swain, uhh, he, uhh, he said how many pops can you drink? Dunno, and so Ted started buying that nickel pop (J. M.: Uh huh) thirteen in a row, all flavors, all kinds, (J. M.: hah, yes) thirteen in a row. Uhh, I wondered if you knew uhh, if they found out, when, when death occurred, whether that was a man or a woman?

J. M.: Well, uhh, Jim Marshall uhh, come in the, I was working there at uhh, uhh, Clair Burton's place for his wife, doing some work in the house there, that was after he'd passed away, so she run a little beer parlor there, you see after he'd passed away, and Jim Marshall come in there and ordered some beer. And so, she got him out a can of beer and then he wanted some more, and then he wanted some more, and wanted some more. He, he'd empty those dang cans and they was just sittin' there. And I was son of a gun, I looked at him, and looked at him, and I thought how much can that guy hold? (Joe: laughs) And when he got through there was thirteen empty cans there. (Joe: laughs again) Judas Priest! And this, and Della uhh, uhh, Burton said that he comes in there every once in a while and drinks a lot like that.

Joe: Uhh, Ok, Merrill, off the top of your head, this one might be a hard one, but, what's the funniest experience that you ever had? If I do get around to writing a book, I want it to be funny. (J. M.: yeah) What's the funniest experience you ever had and the most embarrassing moment, not necessarily the same thing, but those two.

J. M.: Oh gosh! Oh, (laughs) well about one of the funniest ex, one of the funniest experiences was uhh, uhh, and I had a number of 'em, was I had a date with uhh, no, Willis Allred was going with uhh, Mesa or with uhh, Swenson, what was her name? Umm, anyhow, he was going with the Swenson daughter, I can't think of her first name, right now. Willis was my cousin. And uhh, they was going together for quite a little while and, in fact, matter of fact we thought they was getting' kind of serious. And then all at once, they broke up. And while they was broke up, why I asked uhh, Mildred, Mildred Swenson, I asked Mildred for a dan..., a date to the dance, for the next Friday night, see. And I just kinda broke in there. And she gave me the date. Well, I had to go to this little house down here, ehh, on, where the uhh, the chapel was settin', new, new chapel was settin', uhh, to pick her up. And uhh, I knocked on the door and her sister, Vonda, was the one that opened the door and le, and ad..., and admitted me. And when I got there, there was a horse tied up at the hitchin' post outside the, the family home there, and I looked at that horse and I thought that dang horse looks like an Allred horse. (They both laugh) And I thought I wonder if Willis has anything to do with that horse. And that was Willis, the one that she'd been going with, see? Now I had a date with her and so uhh, when I was admitted in the front room, uhh, by Vonda, there set Willis. And I knew why he was there, because they had made up and I had a date with that gal. (Joe laughs) so...

Joe: How, how did it turn out?

J. M.: Well, uhh, I, I was seated, you know, very courteously and, and Willis and I, we were good friends so we had a jolly time chatting there together but when a half an hour had gone by, Mildred never did come in, while we, I was sitting there, but Vonda was the, come in off and on, see, her younger sister, until I could see Willis was getting nervous and I was terribly nervous. I didn't know what to do. I had a date and I knew he had a date and he, I knew he didn't know that I had a date. (Joe laughs) And both of us was there for the same girl, but I knew what the deal was and I was trying to figure out how to get out of it. For the life of me, I didn't know, I didn't want to get up and walk out cause that would've deterred Willis. And uhh, and so, our conversation finally run out between us because we had a jolly time and finally I put, just put two and two together and when Vonda come in there one of those times, I said, "Well, Vonda, get your coat and let's go." (Joe laughs) I just shot at her and right from the clear blue sky, didn't know whether she'd do it or whether she wouldn't. She was a cute little picture. I liked her better than I did Min, did Mildred. And she just walked back in the kitchen and come back with her coat and I slid her into her coat. We walked out of the door (Joe laughs) an going to a party, it was a party, that's what it was. It was a party we was goin' to and just as quick as that screen door shut, I said, to Vonda, I said, "Boy, you saved my life!" and she said, "I know it!" (And they both laugh.) Well, then we left and right directly after we got to the party, here come Mil, Mildred and Willis. Well, uhh, you see, and I told Willis about that later on and he said, "Well, if I'd have known that, of course, he said, I wouldn't have been there. And I, but that was about as funny an experience as I believe I had. And now the other question was, what was?

Joe: Most embarrassing.

J. M.: Oh, most embarrassing. I hate to tell the ones that uhh, well so's the tape would pick that up. (They both laugh) We had one embarrassing, but then, I, I won't tell that, that's most too embarrassing. If I could think of one that was a little better, oh, oh, if I could just think. I know I've got 'em. I know, (Joe tries to say something but I can't understand anything) one might come to me, I know, but I can't think right now.

Joe: It's not that important anyway, uhh. Ok, there's something with you that I missed that I should have on here. Uhh, you don't remember but I first started going to scout meetings when I was nine years old, (J. M.: Uh huh) and Merrill Rasmussen was the scout master. (J. M.: yeah) And when I got to be twelve, then I was finally allowed to be a scout (J. M.: yeh) and uhh, pass the tes, pass the test (J. M.: You were officially a scout then? They didn't have cub scouts then.) I was officially, I was officially a scout. No, they didn't have cub scouts then. (J. M.: No, they didn't have 'em that day, or year.) Uhh, for a long time you were, er, you were scout master and Albert was assistant scout master. (J. M.: yeah) Later on when I got in, out of high school, or in to high school or something, I became assistant scout master. (J. M.: Uh huh) Uhh, how long were you scout master?

J. M.: Well, scouting was organized in 19 and 19, uhh, I believe, or 18 or 19 and uhh, Bishop uhh, M. J. Shaeffer, I don't believe he was a bishop at that time, I believe he was a counselor to uhh, Roy Taylor, but he came down through the brush a horseback down to our place there on the river bottom, where the cattle died, and I seen him acomin' through the sagebrush, there was no roads at that time, you just as well go around through the brush, you know, (Joe: yeah) there was no roads. And he come down there and when he rode up to me, why I said, uhh, "Well you come to see dad, but he's out in the field" and I just pointed up in the field where dad was irrigating. He said, "No, I come to see you!" Well, that took me by surprise, see, (Joe: yeah) a member of the bishopric come to see me. And he said, "We want to organize scouting in Lapoint." And he says, "We decided we want you to organize that scouting program and also be the, the scout master of it." Well, I liked boys and so it didn't take me, it took me wholly by surprise, but not to my disliking at all, (Joe: yeah) and so they got me the necessary papers and I corresponded with the Timpanogos Council, at that time, in Provo, and we organized boy scouts, Troup 239, which is operating to this day in Lapoint, Troup 239. And I was the scout master and I operated as that scout master for about eighteen years, just a little short of twenty years. And then I was out, and then I was in and out from then on until I was about eigh, seventy years old, eighty years old, uhh just associated with scouting one way or another. (Joe: Uh huh) But I was in for about eighteen years steady. And I had boys, I had 27 boys and uhh, a number of 'em was older than myself, and that's, in those troops. It takes si, it takes twelve boys for a troop. I had two troops and I was the scout master over the whole thing. And it lasted for a long while and I'll tell you we had some good times in scouting. (Joe: Well, I did!) Ever, every year we'd go on these this day hikes, you know. Every spring we'd go on three day hikes. And we went up here into Mosby Park one year and you can remember--was you there? Your dad was there, ohh, you was there (something I can't understand—it was?) when uhh, we tracked that mountain lion and pulled him, almost ran into camp. Do you remember that?

Joe: I'm not su, I'm not sure that that was the same time. I remember being around a campfire and I dunno if it was Paradise, or where it was, but uhh, uhh, heard, that's the first time that I ever heard a mountain lion (J. M.: yeah) screaming like a baby (J. M.: yeah) screaming like a, a woman, (J. M.: yeh) or uhh, a young woman and uhh, we talked and listened an, and that thing kind of circled our camp (J. M.: yeah) and when we finally decided that it was a mountain lion, when you finally decided it was a mountain lion, Dean, uhh, Dean Angus, boy he, (Joe claps his hands) he was gone, he hit the bed.

J. M.: Yeah, you're dang right. It was exciting. Uhh, the boys was off playing flag rating, out there, you know, in the big camp ci, fire that we had going there and the fathers were standing there was Jake Rasmussen, my dad, and your dad, and, and tha, Lamoreaux (Joe: Bert Lamoreaux) Bert Lamoreaux and there was all those fathers there and I don't know whether there's anymore or not. But, your dad was the first to call my attention to it, I was playing with the boys, and he said, "Merrill", he said, "There's somebody lost out there in the timber." And so uhh, he said, I, Why don't you and Albert go across the

park there, and up on that cliff, on the other side, and build a big fire there. And he said, that was early in the spring, you see. (Joe: Uh hum) And so uhh, from that uhh cliff there you could see all the country, see that light, see, and that would give them a chance to come to, to us, or something like that, you know if somebody was lost in the timber. So Albert and I went out there and there's a dang chuck holes in that park, you know, 'bout this deep and some of 'em that deep and it was dark enough (Joe: Two, two or three feet deep, huh?) And it was dark enough so we'd stumble into them, they was in big tall grass, your know, (Joe: Yeah) an, and gosh, it, it was a nuisance 'cause we couldn't see 'em too well. Anyhow, we made it across the park, only about a eighth of a mile, or less, and then we started up the other side and got about halfway up around that uhh, ledge and then we heard that scream, you know, boy, I'll tell you right now, we was out in the open then, (Joe: yeah) for right straight, uhh, the park made a turn this way, and we was out right, an, up, up in the park why we that scream and I said to Albert, I said, "Boy, that's no man." (They both laugh.) They, we was standing there in the dark. Well, we didn't go anyway, any further up on that rock. We just started comin' back down. (They both laugh again.) When we hit the bottom there in the pas, in the grassland again, we walked just as fast as we dared to and when we stumbled into those dang holes, it'd scare you to death. It just felt like a lion was jumping right square on top of our backs. (Joe laughs again) Oh boy, we was two scared kids and uhh, our hair stood up just like that. Well, when we got back to camp, Danny Marshall.....

END OF TAPE!